The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and political fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 30, 1912, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1919.

Thru Payroll Savings

WHOLE NO. 1808 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1945 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 35, NO. 49

Significant Pacts Reached At Labor-Industry Parley

Meeting Not Complete Failure Pictured By Newspapers

Washington, D. C.—The Labor-Management Conference ended without accomplishing all it set out to do, but it did not result in complete failure, as many newspapers reported.

Four significant agreements were entered into by the top representatives of labor and industry who took part in the month-long meeting. These were:

1—Resort to voluntary arbitration to settle disputes involving interpretation of provisions of collective bargaining contracts, and rejection of compulsory arbitration in any form.

2—Sensible and cooperative procedures to be followed by employers and unions in negotiating their first contract.

3—Strengthening and improvement of the United States Conciliation Service so that this agency can be more widely utilized for peaceful settlement of disputes.

4—Establishment of a standing committee, made up of the heads of the participating labor and industry groups, who will meet periodically from time to time in an effort to reach further friendly understandings in the public interest.

However, the conference did fail to arrive at any declaration which could be used as a guide for the determination of the wage issue which is threatening to disrupt many reconversion industries.

There was never much hope that the conference could resolve this thorny issue. But labor believed it would be possible for the conference to draft an acceptable definition of collective bargaining methods by which wage problems and other important issues could be settled around the table by employers and unions in each plant or industry. However, the industry delegates rejected the reasonable recommendations of labor on this vital point.

"The unwillingness of a minority of employers to go along with more progressive industrial leaders at the conference," President Charles J. McGowan of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, and an AFL delegate, commented at the close of the proceedings.

Similar irreconcilable views prevented the conference from coming to agreement on methods for eliminating jurisdictional disputes. Labor impasse was reached with regard to a clarification of "management's right to manage."

Spokesmen for both groups expressed the hope that the meetings may make it possible to resolve these differences and to promote better understanding and cooperation.

In discussing the results of the conference on the AFL's "Labor-USA" radio program, Mr. McGowan deplored the lack of unity among the various groups of employers who were represented at the conference. He offered this advice:

"In the critical times ahead it is imperative that labor close its ranks and unite in the interests of the nation's welfare.

"It is also of the utmost importance that every labor union in America exercise patience, restraint and discipline. Unions can serve their members best by avoiding dangerous extremes and by living up to the spirit and the letter of their contracts with management.

"Every member of organized labor must scrupulously respect contracts if we expect management to do likewise."

In a closing address to the conference, President Daniel J. Tobin of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, warned management against advocating legislation invoking penalties against unions.

"The more you endeavor to crucify labor through legislation or otherwise," he declared, "the more you remove the possibility of peaceful labor relations. Labor cannot and never will submit to such demands either by capital or by labor-hating political office holders."

AFL Wage Hike Demand Killed By Employer Vote

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor's attempts to obtain from the Labor-Management Conference a declaration in favor of higher wages which would serve as a guide to the determination of disputes in reconversion industries was defeated by the opposition of management.

The first objective of the AFL delegates was to get agreement on better collective bargaining methods which would make it possible for employers and unions in each plant or industry to settle their wage problems according to the merits of each case. When the committee considering this subject failed to bring in a unanimous report, AFL President William Green submitted the following resolution to the final plenary session of the conference:

"Resolved, that if our national economy is to be preserved, our war debts liquidated and the purchasing power of the American public maintained at high levels in order to avoid disastrous unemployment and deflation, it is of first and utmost importance that general wage increases be granted immediately and adequately."

Mr. Green told the conference that the AFL is mobilizing all its strength in support of the wage demands of its affiliated unions. He declared that the AFL will wage "an unrelenting and uncompromising fight for higher wages which are justified by economic conditions."

Mr. Green blasted the CIO resolution on wages as "innocuous" and assailed CIO President Murray for refusing to serve on a subcommittee created by the Executive Committee to consider wage recommendations.

"He was on strike," Mr. Green charged, "and he maintained his strike during the entire conference."

The United Mine Workers and the Railroad Brotherhoods supported the AFL resolution on wages, but since it required a unanimous vote for adoption, the "nays" from the management side killed it.

Congress To Aid Postal Workers

Washington, D. C.—A new and very effective form of collective bargaining was instituted by President William C. Doherty of the National Association of Letter Carriers at a dinner given by the union in honor of Postmaster General Hannegan.

Gathered around the festive board were many leading members of Congress, including members of the Senate and House Post Office Committees which must pass all legislation affecting the welfare of postal employes. Prominent AFL officials, including President Green, Secretary-Treasurer Meany and several members of the Executive Council, also attended.

And here's what happened! Without any of the union officials bringing up the subject or even hinting at it, the Congressional leaders and Postmaster General Hannegan, of their own accord, pledged themselves to support a new pay bill increasing the salaries of all postal workers in order to make up for the loss of overtime and take-home pay.

Chairman Burch of the House Post Office Committee stated flatly that his committee "is going to do something satisfactory about increasing that take-home pay for postal workers." Senator Mead said, "You can count on me to help" on higher pay legislation. Postmaster General Hannegan chimed in that he "certainly favored whatever legislation Congress may see fit to enact" for higher pay.

Compulsory Cool-Off Bill Urged By Truman In Message

AFL And House Group Fight Anti-Strike Bills

Washington, D. C.—Organized labor joined a bipartisan group of liberal Congressmen in an effort to head off vicious antistrike legislation now pending in the House of Representatives.

A report that informal meetings was called by House Rules Committee Chairman Albert J. Sabath at which the Congressmen consulted with the top leaders of labor on ways and means of blocking passage of hasty and ill-considered legislation proposed by the antilabor bloc headed by Representative Smith of Virginia.

AFL President William Green and several other labor leaders addressed the meeting.

Support from two outside sources helped to rally the spirits of the conferees. Eric Johnston, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, obviously referring to the pending House bill, warned in a radio address against "hasty or ill-conceived" legislation in the wake of the Labor-Management Conference.

"We must not allow the pressures of this difficult moment to stampede us into national policies which we will have cause to regret and bewail later," Mr. Johnston said.

Similarly, in his message to Congress on fact-finding, President Truman expressed the hope that Congress "will not adopt repressive or coercive measures against either side."

Meanwhile, the AFL redoubled its efforts to defeat the pending Smith bill and the Hobbs bill by appealing to all affiliated organizations and members to write letters to their Congressmen opposing these measures.

UNEMPLOYMENT PAYMENTS INCREASE IN NEW YORK

Albany, N. Y.—Payments of unemployment insurance to jobless workers in New York State during October amounted to $12,283,111, an increase of 79 percent over September, it was announced by Edward Corsi, Industrial Commissioner. The number of eligible claimants receiving benefits rose from 136,844 during the last week of September to 152,572 in the last week of October.

New York City had the greatest increase in the number of claims filed, total swelling from 45,215 in September to 60,763 in October. Other communities which reported important increases were Schenectady, Troy, Syracuse, Niagara Falls, Yonkers, New Rochelle, Huntington, Hempstead and Rockville Center.

Claimants released from war industries received approximately three-quarters of the benefits. Women received 55 percent of the total payments.

30-Day Ban On Strikes And Fact-Finding Board Opposed By AFL

Washington, D. C.—Taking the nation by surprise, President Truman recommended, in a special message, that Congress enact legislation patterned after the Railway Labor Act to prevent strikes throughout private industry.

His plan called for a compulsory cooling-off period of 30 days, during which strikes or lockouts would be unlawful, whenever the Secretary of Labor certifies to the President that a pending dispute threatens the public interest and that collective bargaining and conciliation have failed to effect a settlement.

The legislation would empower the President to appoint special fact-finding boards in each case which would investigate the dispute during the cooling-off period and make public a report and recommendations within 30 days.

The President's plan was greeted coolly by organized labor, but the stock market jumped from 1 to 5 points when it was announced.

AFL President William Green commented:

"In my judgment, the recommendations of the President will be unacceptable to labor. The principles and policies of the Railway Labor Act are in no way suited to private industry as a whole. The plan proposed for fact finding will operate disadvantageously to both employers and workers in many cases. The American Federation of Labor cannot approve this legislation."

The President acted almost immediately after the end of the Labor-Management Conference and his recommendations reflected the belief in Administration circles that the conference had failed to produce workable machinery to assure industrial peace.

Suggestions similar to those contained in the President's message had been considered by the labor and industry delegates, but did not find favor with them. The opposition was strongest in labor circles in the management field.

In his message the President specifically urged that the cooling-off and fact-finding machinery be applied to such industries as steel, autos, aviation, mining, oil, utilities and communications.

While the President emphasized this list was not intended to be complete or exclusive, he added:

"The general pattern of that act (Railway Labor Act) is not applicable to small industries or to small local disputes in large industries. The objective should be to cover by legislation only such stoppages of work as the Secretary of Labor would certify to the President as actually affecting the national public interest."

The procedure outlined by the President follows:

After certification of a dispute, the President shall appoint a fact-finding board within 5 days. The board shall hear the facts of the dispute and make public its report. From the time of certification until 5 days after the board has made its report, it stands a total of 30 days—"it should be made unlawful to call a strike or lockout or to change the terms or rates of pay, hours, working conditions or established practices, except by agreement."

At the expiration of the cooling-off period, no further restrictions against strikes or lockouts would be in force, but the President believes that pressure of public opinion will force the parties to the dispute to accept the fact-finding board's recommendations.

Labor-Management Parley Agreements

Washington, D. C.—The following declarations were adopted unanimously by the Labor-Management Conference and should serve in the future as a guide to better labor-management relations:

Report of Executive Committee

Resolution No. 1

Resolved, that the Labor-Management Conference urge on all elements of labor and management the broad democratic spirit of tolerance and equality of economic opportunity in respect to race, sex, color, religion, age, national origin or ancestry in determining who are employed and who are admitted to labor union membership.

Resolution No. 2

Resolved, that this conference expresses its approval of the formation of an informal committee consisting of 21 members:

Two from the National Association of Manufacturers,
Two from the Chamber of Commerce of the United States,
One from the American Federation of Labor,
One from the Congress of Industrial Organizations,
One from the United Mine Workers,
One from the Railway Labor Executives' Association,

this group to meet at such times as it sees fit for the purpose of creating better understanding between the respective groups, without any stated agenda, without any fixed date, and without any responsibility for their respective groups, and without any definite program.

Existing Collective Agreements

The committee recommends:

1.—Collective bargaining agreements should contain provisions that grievances and disputes arising over interpretation or application of the terms of the agreement are to be settled without resort to strikes, lockouts or other interruptions to normal operations by an effective grievance procedure with arbitration as the final step.

2.—To be effective, the procedure established for the settlement of such grievances and disputes should meet at least the following standards:

A. The successful effort in the agreement of a spirit of tolerance and settlement of grievances or disputes, and the method of taking an appeal from one step to another should be so clearly stated that agreement as to be readily understood by all employes, union officials and management representatives.

B. The procedure should be adaptable to the handling of the various types of grievances and disputes which come under the terms of the agreement.

C. The procedure should be designed to facilitate the settlement of grievances and disputes as soon as possible after they arise. To this end:

(1). The agreement should provide adequate but definite time limits for the presentation of grievances and disputes, the rendering of decisions and the taking of appeals.

(2). Issues should be clearly formulated at the earliest possible moment. In all cases which cannot be settled in the first informal discussions, the positions of both sides should be agreed to in writing.

(3). Management and union should encourage their representatives to settle at the lowest steps grievances which do not involve broad questions of policy or of contract interpretation and should delegate sufficient authority to them to accomplish this end.

(4). The agreement should provide adequate opportunity for both parties to investigate grievances under discussion;

(5). Provision should be made for priority handling of grievances involving discharge, suspension or other disciplinary action.

D. The procedure should be open to the submission of grievances by all parties to the agreement.

3.—Managements and unions should inform and train their representatives in the proper functioning of the grievance procedure and in their responsibility under it. In such a program it should be emphasized:

A. That the basic objective of the grievance procedure is the achievement of sound and fair settlements and not the "winning" of cases;

B. That the filing of grievances should be considered by foremen or supervisors as aids in discovering and removing causes of discontent in their departments;

C. That any tendency by either party to support the earlier decisions of its representatives when such decisions are wrong should be discouraged;

D. That the willingness of management and union officials to give adequate time and attention to the handling and disposition of grievances and disputes is necessary to the effective functioning of the procedure.

E. That for the sound handling of grievances and disputes both management and union representatives should be thoroughly familiar with the entire collective bargaining agreement.

4.—The parties should provide by mutual agreement for the final determination of any unsettled grievances or disputes involving the interpretation or application of the agreement by an impartial chairman, umpire, arbitrator, or board. In this connection the agreement should provide:

A. A definite and mutually agreed upon method of selecting the impartial chairman, umpire, arbitrator, or board;

B. That the impartial chairman, umpire, arbitrator, or board should have no power to add to, subtract from, change or modify any provision of the agreement but should be authorized only to interpret the existing provisions of the agreement and apply them to the specific facts of the grievance or dispute;

C. That reference of a grievance or dispute to an impartial chairman, umpire, arbitrator or board should be deemed as a last step in the procedure and should not be resorted to unless the settlement procedures of the earlier steps have been exhausted;

D. That the decision of the impartial chairman, umpire, arbitrator or board should be accepted by both parties as final and binding;

E. That the cost of such impartial chairman, umpire, arbitrator or board should be shared equally by both parties.

5.—Any question not involving the application or interpretation of the agreement as then existing but which may properly be raised pursuant to agreement provisions should be subject to negotiation, conciliation or such other means of settlement as the parties may provide.

6.—Where an agreement contains a renewal clause and a change or modification or reopening of the agreement is requested by either party or where the existing agreement is about to be terminated, ample time prior to the termination of the agreement should be provided for the negotiation of a new or modified agreement. If such negotiations should fail, the parties should make early use of conciliation, mediation, and, where mutually agreed to, arbitration.

7.—Nothing in this report is intended in any way to recommend compulsory arbitration, that is, arbitration not voluntarily agreed to by the parties.

Initial Collective Agreements

1.—Collective bargaining undertaken promptly and in good faith, following recognition of a properly established bargaining agent either by peaceful acquiescence by the employer or by operation of lawfully constituted procedures, is viewed as the first step to avoid strike action by the union or refusal to bargain by the employer.

Observance of the following widely applicable rules will contribute to orderly and peaceful procedure in making the first contract:

(a) The employer should not question his obligation to bargain with the union chosen as the bargaining agent for all employes in a properly established bargaining unit.

(b) Neither side should delay immediate establishment of bargaining relationships and commencement of contract negotiations.

(c) In their negotiations, the parties should look toward the preparation of a signed agreement covering a defined period of time.

(d) Before specific bargaining on terms is undertaken, each party should present to the other a general statement of its position and the principles which it regards as fundamental to the settlement it should be mutually sought. Precise definition of the issues also should precede specific bargaining. In consummating their first agreement, the parties should carefully define its every term.

(e) It is well that respect and consideration be given to proposals presented by either the employer or the union and every reasonable effort made to bring about strictly fair and unreasonably difficult terms to either side. Both sides should avoid inflammatory statements which question the sincerity or good faith of the other party.

(f) Both parties should avoid threats or actions which interfere with normal operations while negotiations are still proceeding in good faith and until all other peaceful procedures have been exhausted.

2.—Conciliation should be employed by the parties if collective bargaining has not resulted in an agreement. Both conciliation may be private or public, and if public, local, state or federal, as best suited to the circumstances.

Conciliation, however, should not be the first resort of parties, but should be undertaken only after reasonable attempts to reach a mutual agreement has been made by direct negotiation.

The conciliator should, wherever possible, be invited by both parties to participate. If that is not possible, the best practice is for the party inviting the conciliator to notify the other party of this action.

3.—If direct negotiations and conciliation have not been successful, voluntary arbitration may be considered by the parties; however, before voluntary arbitration is agreed upon as a means of settling unsettled issues, the parties themselves should agree on the precise issues, the terms of submission, and the principles or factors by which the arbitrator shall be governed.

Conciliation Services

1.—A Federal Conciliation Service, which by its impartiality and efficiency wins the respect of the public, management and labor, will be a strong force in minimizing industrial disputes and preventing strikes.

2.—The parties to labor disputes should conscientiously exhaust all possibilities of settlement through collective bargaining before either party requests conciliation or mediation services.

3.—As far as possible, and wherever practicable, disputes should be settled at the plant level. Local, state or federal conciliation agencies should be used, as best suited to the circumstances. There should be close coordination between the activities of the federal, state, and local conciliation services.

4.—The committee recommends that every effort be made toward the reorganization of the United States Conciliation Service to the end that it be established as an effective and completely impartial agency within the Department of Labor.

In order to obtain the advice, assistance, support, and confidence of management and labor, a representative advisory committee to the director of the United States Conciliation Service should be created. The advisory committee should consist of equal numbers of representatives of management and labor selected by the Secretary of Labor from a list of nominees submitted by leading organizations of management and labor.

The advisory committee should be responsible for making recommendations to the Secretary of Labor and to the director of the conciliation service with respect to the policy, procedures, organization and the development of adequate standards and qualifications for the personnel of this service.

5.—The personnel of the conciliation service should be characterized by impartiality, integrity, and a knowledge of labor-management problems. To this end, the committee recommends:

(a) Conciliators should be appointed without regard to Civil Service requirements.

(b) The salaries of commissioners and officers in the service should be sufficient to attract persons possessing the necessary qualifications.

(c) Provision should be made for practical training for newly-appointed conciliators. During such training, the newly-appointed conciliators should be assigned as observers in the course of actual conciliation of a variety of cases. Adequate facilities should be made available to assure thorough knowledge on the part of conciliators of the policies of the service, techniques of conciliation, labor laws and industrial relations practice. Current information services should be made available to all conciliators to keep them currently abreast of developments. Conciliation services should to provide them with up-to-date information on current labor law and industrial relations practice. In addition, periodic refresher courses should be conducted in the interest of maintaining high standards of service.

(d) The number of conciliators should be adequate to permit the service to perform conciliation functions adequately and promptly.

(e) Congress should immediately make available funds for improving and strengthening the service.

6.—Conciliation must, under all conditions, be maintained as distinct and separate from arbitration. A commissioner of conciliation must never be assigned to a case as an arbitrator, except where a written request for his services as arbitrator has been made by both parties to a dispute. All service fees provided by the U. S. Conciliation Service should continue to be voluntary.

Plumbers Plan To End Disputes

Washington, D. C.—Approval of a plan to end jurisdictional disputes within its own organization was announced by the executive board of the United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters of the United States and Canada.

President Martin Durkin disclosed that the proposal, which is designed to eliminate jurisdictional rows between steamfitters and plumbers, will be submitted for final adoption to the 34th convention of the United Association in September, 1946.

Under the tentative agreement, members of the union would be permitted without bar or restriction to transfer their work from the union's jurisdiction, thus wiping out previous lines of demarcation between plumbers, steamfitters and other pipefitters affiliated with the United Association.

It is further proposed to change the name of the union to the "United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada."

"We regard this plan as an opportunity to strengthen and harmonize our union and wipe out the root cause of many jurisdictional disputes," Mr. Durkin said. "I am confident that it will be overwhelmingly approved at our next convention."

WATCH FOR NEXT ISSUE OF AFL NEWS SERVICE!

Washington, D. C.—Watch for the following item in the next issue of the AFL Weekly News Service:

1.—Full reports on testimony by AFL President William Green, Vice President Harry C. Bates and Economist Boris Shishkin before Senate Banking and Currency Committee on vital housing legislation.

2.—Account of challenging address by Secretary-Treasurer George Meany at dinner in his honor given by Pennsylvania Council of Public Employes at Harrisburg.

3.—Text of labor recommendations at Labor-Management Conference which were rejected by management delegates.

4.—Interesting talks by guest speakers and AFL officials on "Labor-USA" radio program.

LABOR, USA

Washington, D. C.—The twenty-second edition of the AFL's weekly radio program, broadcast over the coast-to-coast network of the American Broadcasting Company under the name "Labor-USA," featured the following significant comments on the Labor-Management Conference:

By CHARLES J. MacGOWAN

President of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers

I regret to report that the Labor-Management Conference, failed to accomplish all it set out to do.

But I cannot emphasize too strongly that the conference was not a complete failure. It did reach unanimous agreement on certain measures which, as time goes on, will serve to reduce industrial strife. Let me summarize the most significant agreements reached and discussed by labor and industry:

First, the representatives of labor and management voted in favor of resorting to voluntary arbitration when disputes arise regarding interpretations or provisions of collective bargaining contracts. At the same time, both sides rejected the imposition of compulsory arbitration. This policy, I am certain, will avert many unnecessary strikes and lockouts.

Second, the conference outlined clear and constructive procedures to be followed by employers and unions in negotiating their first contracts. If these methods are applied in a sensible and businesslike way, many needless strikes may be avoided.

Third, the conference called for the strengthening and improvement of the United States Conciliation Service so that this agency can be more widely utilized for the settlement of differences by peaceful means.

Finally, the organizations of labor and management represented at the conference agreed to set up a standing committee which will meet informally from time to time in an effort to reach further friendly understandings in the public interest.

So far, the actions of the conference were all to the good. But these actions did not go far enough.

For instance, the conference failed to issue any declaration which could be used as a guide for the determination of the wage issue which is threatening to disrupt the nation's reconversion program.

Of course, there was little hope that such an understanding could be arrived at in a meeting of this nature. Where the conference really fell down was in its failure to draft an acceptable definition of collective bargaining methods by which wage problems and other important issues could be settled around the table by employers and the unions representing their workers. Otherwise the conference were unable to get together on the proper method for eliminating jurisdictional strikes and on a clarification of management's right to manage.

The unwillingness of a minority of employers to go along with more progressive industrial leaders hurt the conference, as did the disunity which, unfortunately, still exists in organized labor.